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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8372
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 7468

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SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - MOGADISHU HORNAFRIK DIRECTOR KILLED

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. In what appears to have been a targeted assassination, the Director of HornAfrik in Mogadishu was reportedly killed on February 4 by armed militia, possibly associated with al-Shabaab. Sources indicate the journalist, Said Tahlil Ahmed, was part of a group summoned to a meeting by an al-Shabaab operative to discuss the media's positive reporting on developments in Somalia. Upon arriving at the meeting location, the group was reportedly fired on by a militia. Ahmed was killed and the other journalists fled the scene. This is the second murder of a Somali journalist this year, following the New Year's Day death of a Shabelle journalist in Mogadishu. End Summary.

Journalist Killed in
an Apparent Set-up

2. (SBU) Multiple sources indicate that the Director of HornAfrik in Mogadishu, Said Tahlil Ahmed, was assassinated in Mogadishu on February 4 at approximately 2:45 p.m. We are told that on the morning of February 4, the directors of ten media outlets in Mogadishu were summoned to a meeting by a member of al-Shabaab's "information department." Our contacts tell us al-Shabaab reportedly wanted to discuss with the media owners their positive reporting on the Djibouti peace process and the media's recent resolve to stop broadcasting extremist material (septel). When the media owners arrived at the appointed location, which was in the Bakara Market area, the al-Shabaab associate suggested moving the meeting to another nearby building. As the journalists rounded a corner en route to the second location, a group of armed militia hidden nearby opened fire on the group. Reports indicate that Ahmed was fatally wounded in the gunfire. We have no information indicating injuries to other journalists.

Post's Reaction

3. (SBU) Post is monitoring this incident and will report any further substantial details. This is the second murder of a Somali journalist this year, following the New Year's Day death of a Shabelle journalist in Mogadishu. We will discuss this incident with the government of newly-elected President Sharif, emphasizing our support for a vibrant and free media in Somalia. In addition, Post will likely send a letter of condolence to Ahmed's family, as has been our practice in previous incidents of violence against journalists. Post's ongoing support and encouragement of journalists, particularly those who remain inside Somalia despite the volatile operating environment for media, have been welcomed

by journalists, who term it "vital."
RANNEBERGER